

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /031 W

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O P 231150Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1999

SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU HI PRIORITY

ASD/PA WASHDC PRIORITY

USDEL FPJMT SAIGON PRIORITY

CDR JCRC NKP APRT TH PRIORITY

CINCPAC PA LNO BANGKOK TH PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY

USDAO SAIGON PRIORITY

USSAG NKP TH PRIORITY

WHITE HOUSE SIT ROOM WASHDC PRIORITY

CJCS WASHDC PRIORITY

13AF CLARK AB PI PRIORITY

COMUSMACHTAI BANGKOK THAILAND PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SPECAT EXCLUSIVE SAIGON 2415

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS VN

SUBJECT: REPATRIATION OF US DIC REMAINS FROM NORTH VIETNAM

SECDEF FOR SECRETARY SCHLESINGER

ASD/PA FOR SECRETARY FRIEDHEIM

USDEL FPJMT FOR COLONEL TOMBAUGH

MACTHAI FOR MG MELLEN

JCRC FOR BG ULATOSKI

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK FOR AMBASSADOR

PA LNO BANGKOK FOR LCOL WHITAKER

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DAO FOR MG MURRAY

WHITE HOUSE SIT ROOM FOR PRESIDENTIAL CY OFFICER

SECSTATE EXDIS

CJCS FOR SJS

COMUSSAG FOR GEN O'KEEFE

CINCPAC FOR ADM GAYLOR

13TH AF FOR CDR

1. THE DRV DELEGATION IS RAISING A QUESTION OVER WHO ISSUES A LETTER OF CERTIFICATION AUTHORIZING AND EMPOWERING UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE TO ACCEPT AND RECEIPT FOR THE DIC REMAINS AT THE TIME OF THEIR TURNOVER TO U.S. CUSTODY AND CONTROL IN HANOI.

2. AN EXHAUSTIVE SEARCH IN FIRLES AVAILABLE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA REVEAL THAT THE FOLLOWING TEXT MF THE LETTER OF CERTIFICATION WAS USED AT THE TIME OF THE TURNOVER OF THE POWS IN HANOI:

"LETTER OF CERTIFICATION 25 MARCH 1973

PURSUANT TO THE AUTHORITY VESTED IN ME BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AS THE CHIEF UNITED STATES DELEGATION TO THE FOUR PARTY JOINT MILITARY COMMISSION, I CERTIFY THAT COLONEL JAMES R. DENNETT, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE, IS AUTHORIZED AND EMPOWERED TO ACCEPT AND RECEIPT FOR REPATRIATED UNITED STATES AND FOREIGN PERSONNEL. IN THIS CAPACITY COLONEL DENNETT IS AUTHORIZED AND EMPOWERED TO PERFORM ALL DUTIES WHICH MAY BE ASSIGNED BY ME PURSUANT TO MY RESPONSIBILITIES AS THE SENIOR REPRESENTATIVE OF MY GOVERNMENT TO THE FOUR PARTY JOINT MILITARY COMMISSION.

G.H. WOODWARD
MAJOR GENERAL, USA, CHIEF"

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I PERSONALLY SEE NO REASON WHY WE SHOULD NOT FOLLOW PRECISELY THIS SAME FORMAT AND HAVE COLONEL TOMBAUGH AS THE PRESENT CHIEF OF THE UNITED STATES DELEGATION TO THE FOUR PARTY JOINT MILITARY TEAM ISSUE THE CERTIFICATION IN THE FORMAT QUOTED ABOVE WHICH HAS ALREADY APPARENTLY BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE DRV.

3. THE DRV HAS STATED THAT THEY COULD ACCEPT MY CERTIFICATION IF IT CAN BE DONE ON STATIONERY AND WITH THE FORMAT WHICH WOULD

DISASSOCIATE ME FROM MY RESPONSIBILITIES AS AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF VIET-NAM. THEY HAVE EVEN GONE SO FAR AS TO SPECIFY THE USE OF STATE DEPARTMENT LETTERHEAD WITH SEAL AND I WOULD BE SIGNING AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE. THIS, OF COURSE, CAN BE DONE AND I COULD SIMPLY SIGN UNDER THE TITLE OF, FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

4. HOWEVER, I AM COMPLETELY OPPOSED TO MAKING ANY CONCESSION AT ALL ON THIS POINT. I BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD QUIETLY, POLITELY BUT VERY FIRMLY STATE THAT WE WILL FOLLOW THE PREVIOUS PROCEDURE WHICH, AFTER ALL, HAS ALREADY BEEN USED AND ACCEPTED BY THE DRV; THAT WHAT IS INVOLVED IS THE RETURN OF THE REMAINS OF MILITARY PERSONNEL; THAT SUCH PROCEDURES ARE UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE; AND NO MORE THAN THE DRV WOULD PERMIT THE USG TO INSTRUCT IT ON ITS INTERNAL PROCEDURES, WILL WE PERMIT THEM TO INSTRUCT US ON OUR INTERNAL PROCEDURES; THAT THE CHIEF OF THE USDEL TO THE FPJMT HAS BEEN DELEGATED THIS AUTHORITY AND IT IS NOT WITHIN THE JURISDICTION OF THE DRV TO INSTRUCT US TO PERFORM THE CERTIFICATION SOME OTHER WAY.

5. UPON REFLECTION, THE PLOY IS RATHER OBVIOUS. AFTER THE RETURN OF THE DICS, OUTSIDE OF THE FOUR PARTY FRAMEWORK, AS THEY WILL ALLEGE, MORE AND MORE PRESSURE WILL BE EXERTED TO COME TO BILATERAL ARRANGEMENT EVEN INVOLVING INVESTIGATION IN GVN CONTROLLED TERRITORY, ALL DESIGNED TO MAKE FPJMT MECHANISM UNWORKABLE, BUT OUR FAULT BECAUSE WE DID NOT CONFORM TO THE PRECEDENT THEY ARE NOW TRYING TO CREATE. MORE IMMEDIATELY, THEY CAN COMPLETELY SABOTAGE THE PRINCIPLES OF THE PRISONER EXCHANGE, AND THEN BLAME THE FAILURE OF THEIR RETURN OF THE LAST HALF OF THE DICS ON OUR FAILURE TO BRING THE US PUPPET IN LINE TO ACCEPT WHATEVER IMPOSSIBLE DEMANDS THEY MAY SURFACE.

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6. EVEN IF THEY BACK DOWN FROM THIS CURRENT DEMAND ON "CERTIFICATION" AS I THINK THEY WILL, WE STILL FACE THIS DANGER. BUT WE SHOULD NOT COMPOUND THE POSSIBLE DAMAGE BY YIELDING ANY FURTHER.

7. I, THEREFORE, REITERATE MY RECOMMENDATION THAT WE QUIETLY, MOST POLITELY, BUT NEVERTHELESS FIRMLY, INSIST ON FOLLOWING PRECISELY THE SAME PROCEDURES AS PREVIOUSLY APPROVED BY HANOI WHICH WILL RESULT IN THE CERTIFICATION BEING ISSUED BY COLONEL TOMBAUGH IN HIS POSITION AS CHIEF OF THE UNITED STATES DELEGATION TO THE FOUR PARTY JOINT MILITARY TEAM.

8. CHUSDEL FPJMT HAS APPOINTMENT WITH CHDRVDEL SUNDAY TO DISCUSS THIS SUBJECT. UNLESS THERE IS SOME OVERRIDING REASON HE SHOULD PURSUE A COURSE OTHER THAN THAT OUTLINED IN PRECEEDING PARAGRAPH HE INTENDS TO FOLLOW THIS LINE.

MARTIN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPATRIATION, MILITARY EXERCISES, POLITICAL SITUATION, COMMITTEE MEETINGS, MEETING DELEGATIONS, POW RETURN, PEACE OBSERVATION MISSIONS, CERTIFYING OFFICERS, MILITARY AGREEMENTS, INTERMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 FEB 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974SAIGON02415
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: P740146-0848
From: SAIGON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740213/aaaaamdmdm.tel
Line Count: 170
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 AUG 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <12-Aug-2002 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <17 DEC 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REPATRIATION OF US DIC REMAING FROM NORTH VIETNAM
TAGS: MOPS, VN, US, FPJMT
To: STATE DOD
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005